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The central design of the Union's official seal is the Eastern Goldfinch, designated State Bird of Iowa in 1933.

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## MRS. H. J. TAYLOR, BIOGRAPHER\*

By T. C. STEPHENS

Readers of "Iowa Bird Life" have become acquainted with Mrs. Taylor's biographical writings. Such sketches have also been appearing for some years past in several other natural history periodicals, for example, the "Wilson Bulletin," "Bios", "Yosemite Nature Notes", etc. She was peculiarly qualified for this type of writing, and enjoyed it greatly because she felt that it was a contribution. Doubtless this work has earned for her name a niche in ornithological literature.

Rose Eugenia Schuster was born on January 5, 1863, on a farm near the small town of Middleton, Wisconsin, near the well-known Lake Mendota. Her early education was obtained in the public schools of that town. She entered the University of Wisconsin in 1882, and was graduated three years later with a degree of B.S. and second honors in her class. She maintained close relations with her Alma Mater after graduation, and became a life member of the Alumni Association. Several years ago the "Rose Schuster Taylor Room" was established in one of the new dormitories as a social center for young men and women.

In 1887 she married Henry James Taylor, a graduate of the University who had been teaching Greek and Latin there while pursuing the course in Law. Following the marriage Mr. and Mrs. Taylor moved to Sioux City, Iowa, where Mr. Taylor practiced law until his death in 1902.

Throughout her long residence in Sioux City Mrs. Taylor was a leading and useful citizen. Perhaps her first and most important contribution to Society was the rearing of a family of successful and useful men and women—three sons and a daughter. Ethel Rose Taylor has made a distinguished record as a teacher in adult education in the public school system of Oakland, California. Henry Sterling Taylor is State Bank Examiner, and located in Berkeley. Dr. Paul S. Taylor is professor of Economics in the University of California at Berkeley. Dr. Arthur C. Taylor is a practicing physician in Appleton, Wisconsin.

From the earliest years Mrs. Taylor's home was open to local and visiting guests. As a hostess Mrs. Taylor acquired a reputation of possessing unusual charm. President Van Hise, of the University of Wisconsin, was a guest on numerous occasions, as were also Professors J. D. Butler, M. V. O'Shea, E. A. Ross, Carl Russel Fish, Dean Goodnight, and various others. Among other noted guests might be mentioned Dr. Elliott Coues, the ornithologist and historian, who was in Sioux City to participate in the dedication of the Floyd Monument; Jane Addams, of Hull House; Dr. A. J. Ochsner, noted surgeon; Badger Clark, poet of South Dakota; Pandita Ramabai, social worker of India.

In the sphere of community service Mrs. Taylor's record is outstanding. For ten years or so she was a member of the Sioux City Library Board, and secretary part of the time. During a continuous period of 25 years she was a member and president of the Board of the Florence Crittenden Home in Sioux City. During the first World War Mrs. Taylor and her daughter, after receiving special training with the Red Cross in Madison, Wisconsin, were placed in charge of Surgical Dressings in the Red Cross organization in Woodbury County. In this department about 1000 women took the course and gave constant and effective service.

\* This article is published posthumously for both author and subject. Dr. Stephens wrote it in the fall of 1943, five years before his own demise. We publish it without change but we have added two titles to the bibliography. Mrs. Taylor, a member of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union from 1939, died at her home at Berkeley, California, January 25, 1951.—Ed.

In 1931 Mrs. Taylor moved to California to be nearer to her family, three of whom reside in Berkeley. During the second World War her commodious and well-lighted basement was converted into a Neighborhood First Aid Station, equipped with two beds and all the necessary appurtenances, and maintained by the two adjacent blocks. An ambulance could back directly into this station from the street.

As a hostess in California Mrs. Taylor entertained many well-known people, including James Willard Schultz, noted author of Indian lore; Dr. R. M. Strong, anatomist and ornithologist; Dr. Carl P. Russell, museum director for our National Parks; Dr. Harold Bryant, Supt. of Grand Canyon National Park; and others. On certain holidays, like Thanksgiving and Christmas, she was accustomed to prepare a memorable dinner for three or four guests from the International House of the University of California. These guests came from such far places as the Gold Coast of Africa and the ancient city of Bagdad. In 1939 she entertained three Chinese girls for the greater part of the summer while they were waiting for passage back to China.

One of Mrs. Taylor's most enjoyable experiences was her service as librarian through several seasons in the Yosemite National Park. She entered the payroll on June 1, 1930, although she had served without pay for several seasons before that. Her work was located in the Museum Building.

After a trip to the East in the fall of 1939, Mrs. Taylor returned to Sioux City to visit friends for a few days, and then embarked upon what seemed to them an adventurous trip. She had learned of the International Peace Garden located in the Turtle Mountain region of North Dakota and Canada. Although it was then late November, she planned and executed a trip to this interesting scenic area, covering the last span of the trip by automobile. A full account of this experience was published in the Sioux City Sunday Journal for April 28, 1940.

As a child in Wisconsin Mrs. Taylor came in contact with the Winnebago Indians who trapped muskrats at Mud Lake on her father's farm. In appreciation the Indians made a canoe which they gave to the Schuster children for use on the lake.

When the marker was placed over War Eagle's grave at Sioux City in 1920 Mrs. Taylor invited several of the descendants, including Julia Conger, granddaughter, and Mercy Bonnin, great-granddaughter, to visit Sioux City and attend the ceremonies. Mrs. Bonnin was the County Clerk in her county in South Dakota. On the day of the dedication Mrs. Taylor served a dinner in honor of these guests. Before the meal was over 15 or 20 Sioux Indians called in the informal Indian fashion. Fortunately, Mrs. Taylor was able to supply them all with refreshments. This was the means of her contact and acquaintance with the Sioux tribe.



MRS. H. J. TAYLOR

From a photograph taken in 1929. The complete picture showed an Indian woman with Mrs. Taylor, and was used as a frontispiece in her book, "Yosemite Indians and Other Sketches," published in 1936.



Mrs. Taylor also enjoyed an intimate acquaintance with some of the Black-foot Indians in Montana, and at one time spent two weeks with the tribe at Browning. The Blackfoot artist, Lone Wolf, spent a week in Mrs. Taylor's home in Berkeley while he was exhibiting his paintings at Gump's in San Francisco. She also had an acquaintance with the Shoshoni and Arapahoe Indians. In 1941 she spent three weeks with them at Ft. Washakie Agency in Wyoming. On this occasion Apikuni and his wife Apahki drove 165 miles to Rawlins to meet Mrs. Taylor and take her to the Agency. Members of this tribe also visited Mrs. Taylor in Berkeley on several occasions.

Perhaps Mrs. Taylor's most intimate Indian acquaintance was with the Yosemite Indians, now a vanished tribe except for half-breed descendants. In 1929 Maria Lebrado, granddaughter of the last Yosemite chief, visited the Yosemite Valley for the first and only time since the tribe's expulsion in 1851 by the Mariposa Battalion. During Maria's visit of about a week in the Valley Mrs. Taylor breakfasted with her daily on acorn mush and bacon. In this way Mrs. Taylor learned much of Maria's life, which she has reported in her two books (1932a and 1936b). But, above all, a true friendship was established. And at Maria's death two years later, at the supposed age of 91, Mrs. Taylor was notified and travelled the 200 miles or more into the mountains to attend the funeral. Maria Lebrado was the last survivor of the Indian inhabitants of the Yosemite Valley. From these Indian friendships alone one can read much of Mrs. Taylor's character—simplicity, sincerity, loyalty.

Mrs. Taylor's interest in natural history began in childhood, and was, doubtless, inherited. At her home in Wisconsin she knew the native wild flowers and animals. In later years from her summer cabin on the South Dakota shore of the Big Sioux River she watched the birds feeding on the dogwood berries in the yard; and these observations were recorded in "Bird Lore" (1924). Many of her friends will recall the hospitality of this cabin on the Big Sioux. These native interests naturally led to her connections with the South Dakota Horticultural Society, the Iowa Conservation Association, and the Wilson Ornithological Club, in all of which she held life memberships. During her active period in these organizations she presented numerous papers on their annual programs.

Mrs. Taylor's crowning achievement was her biographical writing. This series of sketches began in 1928 with a sketch of Alexander Wilson, the pioneer American ornithologist, and was followed by 22 other biographical sketches, mostly of American biologists—ornithologists, botanists, and entomologists. Her papers have covered a rather broad field, with botany strongly emphasized. A perusal of her titles will show that biography leads, while botany and conservation are secondary fields of discussion. The best way to present a true picture of our subject's literary accomplishment is to display the list of titles, and this is given below.

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- 1924. Meal-time in the Dogwoods. Bird-Lore, XXVI, 245-246.
- 1927a. The History and Distribution of the Yellow Nelumbo, Water Chinquapin, or American Lotus. Proc. Ia. Acad. Sci., XXXIV, 119-124.
- 1927b. Some John Muir Reminiscences. Yosemite Nature Notes, VI, 69-70.
- 1928a. Alexander Wilson—A Sketch. Wilson Bull., XL, 75-84.
- 1928b. Woman's Contribution to Pioneer Life. 28th Ann. Rep. S. D. Hort. Soc.,

- 1929a. Another Rare Accession for the Yosemite Museum. Yosemite Nature Notes, VIII, 71-74.
- 1929b. Maria Lebrado is a Guest at Museum. Yosemite Nature Notes, VIII, 85-86.
- 1929c. Dr. Elliott Coues—A Sketch. Wilson Bull., XLI, 219-228.
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- 1932c. Snow and Goss, the Pioneers in Kansas Ornithology. Wilson Bull., XLIV, 158-169.
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- 1936a. Thure Ludwig Theodor Kumlien. Wilson Bull., XLVIII, 86-93.
- 1936b. Yosemite Indians and Other Notes. Jonck and Seeger, San Francisco, 1-103.
- 1937a. Ludwig Kumlien. Wilson Bull., XLIX, 85-90.
- 1937b. John Maynard Wheaton. Wilson Bull., XLIX, 276-282.
- 1937c. A Toast to the Field School. Yosemite Nature Notes, XVI, 89-93.
- 1938. Lynds Jones. Wilson Bull., L, 225-238.
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- 1940b. John Muir, Interpreter of Nature. Bios, XI, 131-140.
- 1941a. To Plant the Prairies and the Plains: the Life and Work of Niels Ebbesen Hansen. Bios, XII, 1-89. (Reprinted in book form, 1941).
- 1941b. Just Roses. Bios, XII, 155-161.
- 1942a. Iowa Ornithologists of Other Days: Rudolph Martin Anderson. Iowa Bird Life, XII, 4-7.
- 1942b. Iowa Ornithologists of Other Days: Paul Bartsch. Iowa Bird Life, XII, 36-39.
- 1943a. An Iowa Ornithologist: T. C. Stephens. Iowa Bird Life, XIII, 2-6.
- 1943b. Iowa's Woman Ornithologist: Althea Rosina Sherman, 1853-1943. Iowa Bird Life, XIII, 18-35.
- 1944. Iowa Ornithologists of Other Days: Charles Reuben Keyes. Iowa Bird Life, XIV, 72-74.
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#### WILSON CLUB TO MEET AT DAVENPORT

The 32nd annual meeting of the Wilson Ornithological Club will be held at the Davenport Public Museum on Friday and Saturday, April 27 and 28, followed by a field trip on Sunday. Besides the usual presentation of papers and movies, there will be an exhibition of bird paintings by contemporary bird artists. There will also be an auction of original paintings and drawings, to help the Club's color-plate fund. There is to be informal reception at the museum before the auction. The annual ornithologists' dinner will be held at Hotel Blackhawk Saturday evening.

Iowa members, with our 1950 Davenport convention still fresh in mind, need not be told that this will be another fine meeting, in this hospitable city, under the able direction of Fred T. Hall.

## WOOD DUCK PRODUCTION AIDED BY NESTING BOXES LAKE ODESSA, IOWA, IN 1950

By KEITH M. SCHREINER and GEORGE O. HENDRICKSON

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In reviewing the literature on the Wood Duck, one point stands out conspicuously. That point is the apparent nation-wide lack of suitable nesting habitat for this species. Hawkins and Bellrose (1941) stated that the provision of nesting boxes for the Wood Duck appears to offer not only the best, but also the only formula for prompt management where nesting sites are at a premium.

During the past summer (1950) the senior writer conducted a Wood Duck nesting box study at Lake Odessa in Louisa County, southeastern Iowa. Of the 5800 acres in the area, about 2500 are under water, 700 farmed and the remainder covered with lush marsh vegetation.

The nesting box used was designed by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. The box is 26 inches tall with a 10-inch inside diameter. The back board of the box protrudes 5 inches for fastening to a support. The entrance is 4 inches in diameter and centered 6 inches down from the top. Fred Schwob, former Director of the Iowa State Conservation Commission, redesigned the removable lid to fasten with wedges instead of hooks and eyes called for in the original plan. The nesting boxes, furnished partly by the Wapello Izaak Walton League Chapter, cost \$17, or about 58¢ a box.

The nesting boxes were erected by April 1, 1950, at which date the first Wood Ducks were seen on the area. To ward off preying mammals, the nesting boxes were placed on trees, both living and dead, completely surrounded by water.

The courtship of the Wood Duck was observed first on April 22, when five hens were swimming in a group encircled by five males. The courtship display of the drake consisted of arching the neck upward and then dropping the head quickly, accompanied by a raising and lowering of the crest. The males frequently made short, menacing dashes at one another, which usually ended short of contact. One male suitor, attempting to intercept a female moving toward a drake of her choice, was chased away promptly by the chosen male. The hen nudged her mate lightly about the head and neck with her bill while the drake fanned his crest. A few minutes later the pair flew away together, leaving the remainder to continue their courting.

On April 29 two drakes were observed to compete for a nearby hen. One drake, after grasping the other by the crest, pulled and tugged lustily. After a moment the losing combatant pulled free, with the loss of a few crest feathers, and swam away. The hen, evincing little interest in the fight, immediately followed the vanquished male and they flew away together.

The sawdust or wood shavings, which composed most of the nesting material, was added before the nesting boxes were erected. The hen completed the nest by making a depression in the sawdust and lining it with down from her body. She made a small depression in the nesting material at the time the first egg was laid, and enlarged it as more eggs were deposited. Usually the first down was deposited at the laying of the second or third egg, but on one occasion six eggs were laid before any down was left. Lining the nest with down usually was not completed until early in the incubation period. A small quantity of down was placed around the top of the depression to cover the eggs when the hen left the box. The first nesting was started on April 14 and the last nest hatched on July 17, which extends the nesting activity over a period of 95 days.



Of the 26 nesting boxes 18 (69 percent) were used by Wood Ducks and 11 of these (61 percent) brought off broods successfully. The successful nests contained 132 eggs, or 83 percent of the total 158 eggs laid. Eleven complete clutches contained from nine to 16 eggs, with a mean of  $12 \pm 1.7$ . By dividing the number of days elapsing between box checks into the additional eggs found, approximately an egg a day was established as the average rate of laying.

Of the 18 clutches started, seven (39 percent) were unsuccessful because of a windstorm and desertion. Five boxes, each containing one or more eggs, were destroyed by an unusually high wind on May 5, 1950. C. E. Lamoureux (May, 1950) reported that it was one of the most destructive wind storms in the history of the state with winds ranging to 100 miles an hour.

Exact incubation periods known on two nests were 29 and 30 days, respectively. The incubation periods for nine other nests were estimated to be between 26 and 33 days. The drakes and hen stayed together during the laying period, but at the onset of incubation the drakes deserted the hens and grouped together in small flocks often observed in bays and pot-holes on the area.

During the cool days in April and early May, the hens incubated the eggs all day and left the nests for only a short time to rest and feed. Later in June and July, as temperatures increased, the hens rarely incubated the eggs through the hot part of the day.

The temperament of the incubating hens varied markedly. Many of the hens were handled without becoming unduly alarmed, and probably they could have been banded easily at this time. A few of the later nesting hens were more shy and flew from the boxes at the slightest disturbance.

A total of 129 ducklings hatched in the 11 successful nests. At hatching, the number of ducklings in the 11 broods ranged from 9 to 15 with a mean of  $11.7 \pm 2.8$ . One hundred and twenty-nine (97.7 percent) of the 132 eggs were fertile.

Young ducklings were observed as they departed from the nesting box on two occasions in a similar manner. As this is discussed often, the experience will be related. On May 27 a hen was observed flying around the nesting box and heard emitting a soft whistle at short intervals. By the time the senior writer had moved in closer, the hen had settled on the water, still issuing the soft, whistle-like call. After about 10 minutes of intermittent calling by the hen and a sudden fluttering noise from the box, a duckling was seen balanced on the rim of the entrance. Shortly it jumped outward and tumbled into the water, where it quickly righted itself and swam to the hen. It took just two minutes and eight seconds for the remaining nine ducklings to leave the box in similar fashion. Sixteen seconds after the tenth and last duckling jumped into the water, the hen led the whole brood across the lake into a dense growth of button bush.

One nesting box was believed to have contained the eggs of two hens. On May 12 the nesting box was empty, but on May 26 it contained 16 eggs. Thus 16 eggs were deposited in 14 days, or less. On close examination the eggs were noted to be of two sizes, as 10 of the eggs were obviously larger than the other six. One of the hens incubated the clutch and hatched 15 ducklings from the 16 eggs. Dump nesting appears to be fairly common among Wood Ducks. Chamberlain (1949) reported indication of dump nesting in several of 62 boxes. Breckenridge (1946) reported a tree-cavity nest containing 47 eggs, of which the measurements indicated laying by two hens.

Locational conditions, such as the height of the nesting boxes from the water, direction faced, distance from shore, proximity to human activity and similar relationships, appeared to have little effect on the usage and success of the boxes. Gigstead (1938), after finding a wide variety and varied con-

ditions of 58 natural nests, concluded that locational conditions are unimportant in the selection or success of the nests.

Two of the nesting boxes were used for nesting purposes by Starlings, and one was used by both a Starling and a Wood Duck. All the Starlings' nests were started between April 29 and May 12, which was well within the time the Wood Ducks were actively seeking nesting sites. All three Starling nests hatched and the young left the boxes. One of the three aforementioned Starlings built a nest over the top of two Wood Duck eggs, which caused the Wood Duck hen to desert the nest. The nests of mud-daubers and wasps were found in all boxes in use by Wood Ducks and without apparent conflict.

Most investigators have found the Wood Duck nesting boxes, especially those nesting boxes placed on land, molested by various predators. There was only one case of predation in the nesting boxes in this investigation. One duckling, that failed to leave the nest with the rest of the brood, was subsequently pecked on the head by an avian predator, presumably a Starling. No loss of ducklings on the water could be attributed positively to predation as no evidence was found.

Two active nests containing two and three eggs, respectively, were deserted. The nest containing three eggs was deserted after the investigator inadvertently dropped a ladder on the box while the hen was inside. A Starling, previously mentioned, caused the desertion of the other nest.

A total of 21 broods was noted to have been reared on the area. Five broods, averaging 9.4 ducklings to a brood at one month of age, lost 2.3 ducklings to a brood from the time of hatching. At eight weeks of age, 12 broods averaged 7.8 for an additional loss of 1.6 ducklings to a brood in the second month. A week before migration started, 21 broods averaged 7.1 young to a brood.

Ducklings under two weeks of age were difficult to find because of the dense cover in which they resided. When on several occasions broody hens were flushed from dense growths of button bush in the close vicinity of nesting boxes known to have hatched previously, immediate search seldom revealed the ducklings. Young Wood Ducks of one brood, frequently observed, spent most of their time on land until they were two weeks old. Frequenting the water more when older, they nevertheless hastily retreated to land at the slightest hint of danger.

Young Wood Ducks, when pursued, dove readily, usually coming up near shore, and sneaking out on the land to hide. Two young Wood Ducks, about six to eight weeks old, chased by the senior writer in an open timber, easily out-distanced their pursuer and hid.

Two broods of Hooded Mergansers on the area behaved very similarly to broods of Wood Ducks. Extreme caution was observed in distinguishing the two species as they are quite easily confused. Although Kortright (1943) states that broods of Wood Ducks and Hooded Mergansers are often closely associated, broods of the two species were never seen together or in the near proximity of each other at Lake Odessa.

Broods were seldom observed far from dense emergent vegetation or thick woody cover along the shore. Button bush was used extensively as shelter cover. Areas containing button bush interspersed with small pot-holes containing marsh smartweed were commonly used as roosting sites by the migrating groups as well as the resident population. No observations were made on feeding in the water. The Wood Ducks frequently fed on the acorns of the pin oak and bur oak in the fall. They were observed frequently in flight, going from mature stands of bur oak to the roosting areas. Kortright (1943) states that Wood Ducks are particularly partial to acorns of the pin and bur oak.



In June an estimated 40 breeding pairs of Wood Ducks were believed to reside in the area. That estimation was derived from known nesting pairs, and sight records over a period of 15 days, from June 12 to June 27, during which the total acreage was covered three times. The breeding population estimate agreed with that of the Federal refuge manager, Fritz Pierce. As stated before, 21 broods, averaging 7.1 young to the brood, or 149 ducklings were thought to have been reared on the Lake Odessa Area. That represents a 186 percent increase over the breeding stock of 40 pairs estimated in June.

In the summer of 1949 the Federal refuge manager estimated the resident breeding stock at 20 pairs, and 40 breeding pairs were estimated to be on the area in the summer of 1950. Probably the nesting boxes were responsible for the increase of breeding adults on the area in 1950, because the number of pairs that used the nesting boxes in 1950 represented 90 percent of the increase over 1949, when no nesting boxes were available.

On August 3, several small groups of Wood Ducks were noticed as they flew into a pot-hole to roost. These flocks, thought to be family groups, were the first indication of concentration. This group contained less than 100 ducks at first, but by September 8, the flocks contained a peak number of 669 ducks at this pot-hole. On August 30, a small concentration of Wood Ducks was noticed as they came in to roost on a second small pot-hole two miles south of the first mentioned. By October 19, when the last field data were taken, the group had increased variably from a low of 57 to a high of 864. At that time an estimated 1250 Wood Ducks were using the two pot-holes for roosting purposes.

By August 15, it was obvious that Wood Ducks were migrating in and out of the area. Semi-weekly counts on the pot-hole roosting areas increased steadily before August 15, but fluctuated considerably after that date. The flocks of Wood Ducks were counted from vantage points as they came to roost. They came mostly in small flocks thought usually to have been family groups, for 406 groups that were counted averaged 6.03 ducks to a group. Musgrove (1947) stated that in the fall Wood Ducks are sometimes seen in large flocks, but are more commonly found in family groups.

Fall migration of the Wood Duck, which started about August 15, was still in progress on October 19 when the last field data were taken. Bent (1923) gave Nov. 9 as the average date of departure for Wood Ducks from southern Iowa. Musgrove (1947) stated that the greater portion of Wood Ducks are early fall migrants, migrating in September and early October, with the greater portion having passed through Iowa by November 1. The migrating Wood Ducks seldom mingled with other ducks on the roosting area, except occasionally with Blue-winged Teal.

The northern-most pot-hole roosting area, mentioned previously, was bordered on the north and east by tall willows. The willows were the roosting place of over 1,000 American egrets which used the area during the summer. Occasionally the egrets roosted down on the button bushes directly over the pot-hole.

Messrs. Schwob and Pierce, mentioned before, were very helpful with time, labor and advice throughout the summer. The Iowa State Conservation Commission is thanked for use of living quarters and the cooperative interest of Dan Nichols, local conservation officer, and of several other employees.

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## BIRD LIFE IN THE SPENCER REGION

By F. L. R. ROBERTS

PINE RIDGE, SOUTH DAKOTA

Spencer, Iowa, where our convention will be held this spring, is a clean, attractive and hospitable little city. Its appearance of newness is due to the fact that most of the business district was destroyed by fire in 1934 and was rebuilt. We shall have a warm welcome there and details of the convention will be efficiently handled.

Near there are a number of good areas for field trips. There are fewer and smaller groves than in many parts of the state, but this lack is made up by the large number of sloughs and small lakes available. Spencer is only 20 miles from our old home, Spirit Lake, the center of the best birding area we've ever known. The bird fauna is, of course, somewhat different than in sections of the state farther south and east.

Most species of hawks and owls are much less abundant. Both species of Rough-legged Hawks are more likely to be seen there, and a Golden Eagle may even be recorded. These three species are cold-month visitors mostly, and may not be recorded at the time of the convention.

Pied-billed Grebes are common, of course, and the others are more plentiful than in other parts of the state. Geese, too, are more plentiful though our convention is a little late for them. Several hundred White Pelicans spend a few weeks in this area each spring. We may see them—they usually leave about the middle of May.

We used to see Prairie Chickens there somewhat commonly after they had become rare over most of the state. They are mainly only stragglers now, however. European or Hungarian Partridges have also decreased in numbers so that it is not probable any will be seen. Chukar Partridges are a possibility.

In the past, huge flocks of shore-birds gathered at every body of water. Northwest Iowa is still, probably, the best place in the state to see them, but flocks are greatly diminished in size.

As more and more of their nesting sites to the north have been drained, the flocks of Franklin's Gulls that visit us have become smaller. There are still flocks of many thousands. Other gulls and terns will be found in rather

greater abundance than elsewhere in the state. Our commonest white tern is Forster's. It is my impression that the commonest white tern in eastern Iowa is the Common Tern.

Possibly somebody will record a Burrowing Owl. I no longer know of any nesting in the vicinity. These birds have greatly decreased in number over most of their range. Even on the wild prairies of South Dakota, where we now live, they are not common.

Arkansas Kingbirds began nesting in Iowa sometime about the beginning of the century. They increased in numbers until, about 1930, they were about as abundant in the northwest area as Eastern Kingbirds. Their number has decreased in recent years. They are still common and everyone will have one on the convention list. At about the time Arkansas Kingbirds were extending their range eastward, Brewer's Blackbird began nesting in western Minnesota. They commonly migrate through all parts of Iowa now, though much more abundantly through the western part. The peak of their migration is in early March, earlier than the somewhat similar Rusties. They aren't likely to be in the area at the time of the convention. Probably all the Meadowlarks seen will be Western. Orchard Orioles are somewhat more common than farther east. Colonies of Yellow-headed Blackbirds are somewhat abundant. Prairie Marsh Wrens are common nesters. Several years ago, more Gambel's Sparrows came to our banding traps than did White-crowns.

The total number of species seen will compare favorably with other sections of the state. At the Spirit Lake convention of 1939, 125 species were listed.

In "Iowa Bird Life" for September, 1949, I made several suggestions for improving the accuracy of our published field lists. These improvements were based on conversations with a number of our members. I hope they can be officially adopted and put into use at the Spencer convention.

#### SPENCER MEETING, SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, MAY 12-13

The annual meeting of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union will be held at Spencer on the above dates. Saturday forenoon there will be bird hikes from 6 to 10. Registration will be at 10. The business meeting and afternoon program will begin at 2 p.m. The banquet program will be at 6:30 p.m., in the Sacred Heart church basement, with Dr. W. L. Breckenridge of the University of Minnesota as guest speaker. Sunday will be devoted to field trips, from 6 a. m. to 2 p. m.

Spencer, in the lakes region of northwest Iowa, offers fine bird trips. Make your plans to attend this meeting. A complete program and other information will be sent to each member late in April.

#### NECROLOGY

Ellison Orr, well known to members of our Union, died at his home at Waukon, Iowa, January 25, 1951, aged 93. He became a member of the Union in 1935, and wrote a number of articles for "Iowa Bird Life" on the early bird life as he had observed it as a boy or young man.

At our McGregor meeting in 1949 he led one of the field trips to the Indian Mounds area and explained their archaeological significance to the large group who were so fortunate as to be present. His last appearance at our meetings was at the fall meeting in Winthrop in 1949. During the evening program at the Methodist church he gave an interesting talk on the work of opening Indian mounds in various places in Iowa.

On August 16, 1949, he was awarded an honorary doctor of science degree by Cornell College, Mt. Vernon, in recognition of his work in archaeology and his knowledge of the subject. We are refraining from giving a longer sketch of his life here, for Dr. Charles R. Keyes published a lengthy biography, with portrait, in "Iowa Bird Life," Vol. XV, 1945, pp. 25-28.



## BIRD-BANDING — A BANNER DAY

By M. L. JONES

Ledges State Park  
BOONE, IOWA

(With Photographs by the Author)

Bird-banding is noted for its varied opportunities. What other hobby is pursued both by the rugged outdoor type as well as the bed-fast individual? What other hobby can be profitably pursued on a hot, dry summer day or a cold, stormy, winter day? What other hobby lends itself to either night or daylight hours?

It would be difficult to find a hobby which can satisfy more of the wants and needs of man than bird-banding. Here's your chance to hunt without expensive guns or cameras. You're not harming wildlife, you're helping it.

If it's outdoor exercise you need, try climbing tall trees to band eagles and hawks. Or, if you are an invalid, try window-shelf feeding and trapping

or color-banding. If you like to be out only in warm weather, trap the summer residents about your home; or, if you have time for hobbies only in winter, establish a winter feeding station and see how many boarders you can get. But don't just feed 'em, band 'em.

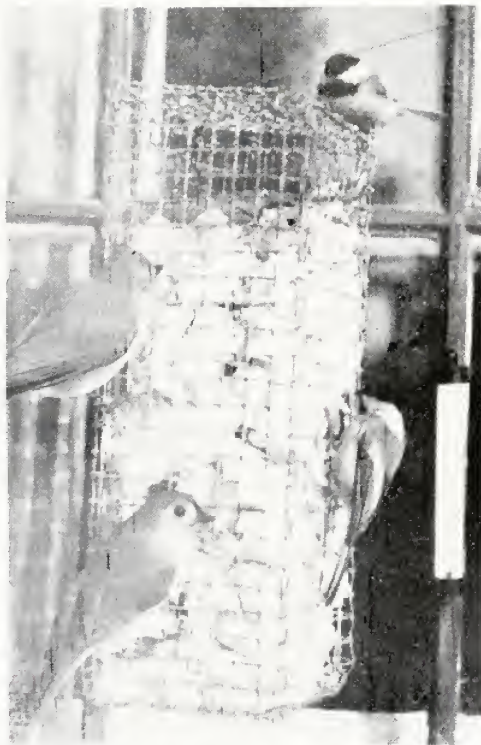
If you are on the night shift, why sleep all day? Establish a hide-out and enjoy the bird life at first hand; or, if you are on the day shift, skip the night-clubbing and enjoy roost raids instead of police raids.

On a cold, wintry day last March the writer made plans for a full day of trapping. One room of the house was set up as trapping headquarters. Fish lines ran from windows to traps for remote control operation of traps placed for the shy individuals. Traps were placed on the ground and on platforms for most of the "small fry". Operations began at sun-up and continued until sundown.

To break the monotony the lunch hour was spent at

trapping and banding birds—a sandwich in one hand and a jay in the other. There were no casualties, neither were there any sandwiches entered in the ledger.

As the experienced feeding-station operator might expect, the Cardinal came first. It was almost a disappointment to find she was not banded. The Red-bellied Woodpeckers seemed to think it was home-coming, for six old-timers dropped in for the day and brought only one new neighbor. The oldest one had been banded in January, 1946.



THE RUSH HOUR

Tufted Titmice and Chickadees.

The juncos were regular customers from daylight to dark. Only four were old-timers. Nine others were given shiny new bracelets. All day long the Chickadees filled the automatic traps. Twenty of them were each caught two or three times during the day. No wonder these birds seemed to eat like pigs; the day's total showed that 62 Chickadees had been regular boarders: 24 of them had boarded here last year. The one Chickadee having full seniority rights had joined the bread-line with 12 others during the first trapping session on a stormy day 'way back in April, 1945. Where he spent 1947 and 1948 will remain a deep, dark secret, but he re-joined the ranks in 1949 and was still here in 1950. Old number "48" (42-93348) must have been a healthy specimen, for he never missed a meal. Of course, no effort is made to trap them often, but each year the roll is called at least once and No. 48, banded March 10, 1946, answered during the first month of each succeeding year; a perfect, five-year attendance record not equalled anywhere else in the experience of the writer with any species of bird.

The Starling is seldom seen in the Ledges, but the complete snow blanket, together with the mob psynology, had attracted them so that two of them were tagged.

That little fellow with the big bright eyes and top-knot, the Tufted Titmouse, is more than welcome at any Iowa feeding station. Operators in some states get a bit weary of taking so many tufties out of their traps, but only five showed up here on the banner day. Only one "old-timer" showed up at the station this year. There seems to be no literature available on the longevity of the Tufted Titmouse so perhaps this one banded in March, 1946, is an old-age record. He must have gone to Florida in 1947 but braved the Iowa winters each year since then.

Who had a corner on the woodpecker market previous to 1950? The writer was worried about the Downy, and wondered if the poison-spray program was exterminating the species. An average of only six downies were banded each year from 1944 to 1950, but during 1950, 43 new birds were banded. On this banner day of March 13, 42 individual downies came in for inspection, but they were all in the tenderfoot class—not one with even a four-year record. They were persistent fellows, though, for 13 of them were trapped two



NATURE'S OWN FEEDING SHELVES

(With the help of the author, who put feed on them. Three Chickadees and a Titmouse.)

or three times during the day rather than miss out on a free meal of suet and walnuts.

If the good die young, then the White-breasted Nuthatches must be saints for not one of them were able to prove their age to be over two years. No one would ever have guessed that there were as many as eight of them around. Only two or three were ever seen at a time. But the bander has the proof.

That shy fellow, the Hairy Woodpecker, was last if not least in the day's catch. Only two males and one female were trapped.

That doesn't sound like a very busy day, does it? But remember, it's cold outside. When Hairy and Red-bellied Woodpeckers were trapped they usually represented one trip each. The others were brought in three or four at a time, but then many of them came for two meals, some for three, which when totaled is equivalent to handling 172 individual birds. Actually only 45 new birds were banded but reference to the records indicated that 42 had been banded from three months to five years earlier.

Now if you want to "enjoy" hardships with your hobby, stay outdoors on a cold, stormy day and it will equal duck hunting. Or, if you are confined to a wheel chair, operate your traps from a window with a trolley and never leave your warm fireside. If it's a hot-weather hobby you want, try banding a hummingbird in a closed car with the thermometer doing 117. This feat of torture was performed on a golf course, too, where other foolish hobbies are pursued. On one such day a Rose-breasted Grosbeak was banded by the writer, but the bird proved his superior judgment by establishing his winter residence near the Panama Canal.

So if you enjoy feeding the birds in winter and watering them in summer, you'll really get a thrill out of banding them. Many of those birds could tell you a very interesting story—make 'em talk!

## THE 1950 CHRISTMAS BIRD CENSUS IN IOWA

Compiled by FRED J. PIERCE

Winter in Iowa began in earnest at Thanksgiving and continued for three full months, with plenty of snow over most of the state and quite steady sub-zero temperatures. In spite of severe weather conditions, Iowa bird students were in the field as usual for the Christmas bird census. The composite list was as gratifying as ever and represented a true picture of winter bird life in Iowa.

A total of 83 observers at 17 stations participated in the bird census. The number should have been somewhat larger, for censuses were taken at Ottumwa and by the Sioux City Bird Club; however, on February 20, when the copy for this March issue was sent to the printer, lists for these two had not been received.

We wish we had time and space to call attention to some of the fine records and to break down the list for analysis. The tabulated list is well worth a careful study. Blue Jay, Chickadee, Cardinal and Tree Sparrow were the only species recorded at all 17 stations; 18 species were listed from one station only, and 10 species from two stations only. Several Rock Doves were reported but without details as to whether they were living in a natural state, so the records were omitted.

Data on place, time, weather and the observers who reported in the 1950 census are given below.

1. BUCHANAN COUNTY (Roads and fields in vicinity of Winthrop and in NE and E part of the county; also a short trip through Backbone State Park): Dec. 25; 8:30 a. m. to 4:30 p. m. Cloudy all day; heavy snowfall all forenoon, ended at noon; 8 in. heavily crusted snow on ground, with some drifts; strong NE wind; temp. 8° at start and at return; 5 miles on foot, 60 by



car. Observers together most of the day. M. L. Jones, Paul Pierce, F. J. Pierce.

2. CEDAR FALLS (Snag Creek, Union Bridge, Josh Higgins Park; river bottoms 50%, upland forest 10%, savannas 30%, fields 10%): Dec. 28; 8 a. m. to 12.1 to 4 p. m. Clear; 4 in. snow on ground; river mostly frozen over; wind S, 3 m. p. h.; temp. 16° to 30°; total hours, 5 on foot, 2 by car; total party miles, 13 on foot, 35 by car. Observers together. Martin L. Grant, Mrs. Russell Rugg, Frances Crouter.

3. CEDAR RAPIDS (Cedar and Chain Lakes, along Cedar River, city parks, roadsides, wooded areas): Dec. 31; 7½ hours. Cloudy; moderate S wind; temp. 25° to 32°; about 40 miles on foot and by car. Observers in two parties. Margaret Lahr, Dr. Alfred Meyer, Ruth Purdy, Rose Richards, Lillian Serbousek, Mr. and Mrs. Earnest Steffen, Dr. Robt. Vane.

4. DAVENPORT (Waterfront, wooded area and brushy borderlands, cornfields; Credit Island, Blackhawk State Park and Rock River in Rock Island, Ill.; Locks 14 and 15, Princeton marsh, McCausland, and Mt. Joy Airport): Dec. 24; 7:30 a. m. to 5 p. m. Slightly cloudy; old ice and snow on ground; Mississippi River 80% frozen; wind S, shifting to NW; temp. 25° at start, 18° at return; total miles, 22 on foot, 85 by car. Observers in two groups. Norwood Hazard, Elton Fawks, Bud Johnson, Dick Lorenz, Pete Petersen.

5. DAVENPORT (Giddings Woods, Credit Island, McMannus Woods, Holy Family Cemetery, Stubbs Woods, fairgrounds, Cedar St. Creek Woods, Fedj Woods and Park): Dec. 31; 8 a. m. to 4 p. m. Clear; 1 in. snow on ground; Mississippi River mostly open; light wind; temp. 32° at start, 40° at return; 14 miles on foot. James Hodges.

6. DES MOINES (Ashworth Park, Impounding Reservoir, Kinglet Woods, 28th St. Sanctuary, Chas. Sing Denman Woods, Crocker Woods, Waukonsa, Walnut Woods, Dove Woods, Pine Hill Cemetery, Sycamore Park, Fisher's Lake, Gray's Lake; open fields 35%, wooded streams 35%, lakeside 30%): Dec. 30; 8 a. m. to 5 p. m. Clear; 2 in. snow in shade; water frozen but some open water in Impounding Res.; wind S, 9 to 10 m. p. h.; temp. 24° to 41°; total party hours, 40 (33 on foot, 7 by car); total party miles, 178 (35 on foot, 143 by car). Observers in six parties. A. C. Berkowitz, Lynn Willcockson, Bruce Berger, Woodward Brown, Mrs. Toni Wendelburg, Oliver Graves, Florence Chamberlain, George McGill, Dick Hanson, Clarke Cochrane, Ronnie Battrick, Olivia McCabe, Dorothy Anderson, Ruth Chapman, Ruth Binsfeld, Janetta DuMont, Irene Smith, Helen Peasley, Gladys and Lester Haskell, Bruce Stiles, Mary Ellen Warters (Des Moines Audubon Society).

7. DUBUQUE (Linwood and Mt. Calvary Cemeteries, Eagle Point Park, City Island, Mississippi River sloughs in Wisconsin; open fields 10%, coniferous woodlands 15%, deciduous woodlands 40%, river sloughs 35%): Dec. 31; 8 a. m. to 4:30 p. m. Overcast; 8 in. snow on ground; river open 300 yds. below the dam; light S wind; temp. 22° to 30°; total hours, 7 on foot, ½ by car; total miles, 7 on foot, 2 by car. Observers together. Janet Birch, Henry Herrmann, Richard Herrman, Clifford Johnson, Amota Lampe, Lois Lampe, R. K. Lampe, Jack Landshulz, William Landshulz, Eugene Thielen, Mary Wiley, Ralph Wiley (Dubuque Audubon Club).

8. DYERSVILLE (list made between Dyersville and Guttenberg, most observations made from car; 20-minute stop at Guttenberg dam on Mississippi River, 20 minutes spent in timber at Millville): Dec. 24; 3:30 to 5:30 p. m. W wind; temp. 15°. Emmett and Edith Polder.

9. LEDGES STATE PARK (Boone County): Dec. 22; 9 a. m. to 5 p. m. Clear; 2 in. snow on ground; 10-mile wind; temp. 20° to 36°; about 5 miles on foot, 40 by car. Observers together in forenoon; Mrs. Jones absent in afternoon. Mr. and Mrs. M. L. Jones.

(Continued on page 18)



# CHRISTMAS BIRD CENSUS

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	1. Buchanan County	2. Cedar Falls	3. Cedar Rapids	4. Davenport (Hazard)	5. Davenport (Hodges)	6. Des Moines	7. Dubuque	8. Dyersville	9. Ledges State Park	10. Mt. Vernon	11. New Providence	12. Newton	13. Sioux City	14. Steamboat Rock	15. Tama	16. Waterloo	17. Winthrop
Flicker (Yellow-shafted)	4	4	16	4	1	15	2	1	2	4	1	9	8	3	2	1	1
Red-bellied Woodpecker	1	4	3	15	3	29	3	1	2	3	3	5	4	3	4	3	1
Red-headed Woodpecker	1	1	10	1	1	1	4	3	1	3	3	5	2	2	5	3	1
Hairy Woodpecker	1	1	3	4	1	16	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
Downy Woodpecker	1	12	24	24	6	88	8	1	15	5	20	11	1	18	6	17	6
Horned Lark	78	3	3	2	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	3	5	6	6	12	1
Blue Jay	12	13	20	38	6	66	19	1	1	5	9	34	4	29	14	13	10
Crow	257	69	135	104	3	77	184	27	43	16	200	25	11	26	109	125	1
Chickadee	2	35	96	73	15	230	9	3	35	11	92	26	10	13	15	20	3
Tufted Titmouse	3	8	14	38	6	125	1	1	4	3	4	8	2	10	8	2	2
White-breasted Nuthatch	3	9	22	13	8	81	7	7	7	4	16	5	2	10	8	2	2
Red-breasted Nuthatch	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Brown Creeper	1	4	4	4	1	12	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Winter Wren	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Robin	1	1	5	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Bluebird	1	1	5	5	1	13	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Golden-crowned Kinglet	1	1	2	2	1	3	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Cedar Waxwing	55	6	11	11	4	52	46	1	70	23	43	115	40	156	5	10	10
Starling	300	160	500	550	1	121	7	150	1	151	50	115	187	116	260	7	7
English Sparrow	300	160	500	550	700	23	290	180	44	1	28	9	3	6	19	7	7
Meadowlark	41	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Red-winged Blackbird	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Rusty Blackbird	2	22	51	30	4	188	14	2	28	6	9	30	4	11	11	1	3
Ironed Grackle	2	22	51	30	4	188	14	2	28	6	9	30	4	11	11	1	3
Cardinal	2	22	51	30	4	188	14	2	28	6	9	30	4	11	11	1	3
Pine Siskin	11	2	5	5	1	192	8	1	60	2	6	45	4	55	1	20	20
Goldfinch	30	110	295	493	20	393	45	12	150	47	58	45	250	130	88	50	50
Slate-colored Junco	31	110	295	493	20	393	45	12	150	47	58	45	250	130	88	50	50
Tree Sparrow	31	110	295	493	20	393	45	12	150	47	58	45	250	130	88	50	50
Harris's Sparrow	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Fox Sparrow	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Song Sparrow	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Lapland Longspur	3	8	6	5	1	6	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Snow Bunting	25	26	35	38	1	29	43	22	24	27	23	33	16	21	22	21	23
Number of Species	24	26	35	38	1	29	43	22	24	27	23	33	16	21	22	21	23
Number of Observers	3	3	8	5	1	22	12	2	2	1	2	9	2	2	1	5	3

\*See data under station in body of article.  
Total Iowa list ..... 70 species.



Meadowlarks were more numerous than on any previous drive by the observers. Two flocks of about 20 each were seen in opposite directions from the Ledges; isolated birds brought the total up to 44.

10. MOUNT VERNON (12-mile radius of city, including old golf course, Muskrat Slough, Ivanhoe, Dark Hollow in Palisades-Kepler State Park, and parking area east of Cedar River; open farm land 50%, town 10%, marsh 10%, park woodland 30%): Jan. 1, 1951; 8:30 a. m. to 5:30 p. m. Cloudy; light snow on ground; river and creeks largely frozen; wind 0-5 m.p.h.; temp. 30° to 36°; total hours, 7 on foot, 1 by car; total miles, 6 on foot, 42 by car. J. Harold Ennis.

The Great Blue Heron had been observed both north of Mount Vernon and in the neighborhood of the Palisades Park for two weeks by local farmers; the only local winter record as far as known. The small flock of Robins was seen at the Palisades feeding on the fruit of the basswood.

11. NEW PROVIDENCE (in general vicinity of Honey Creek, along about 4 miles of its length, south and west of town; deciduous woodland 65%, open farmland 30%, farmsteads, evergreen groves and yards 5%): Dec. 26; 8:30 a. m. to 12:30, 1:45 to 5:30 p. m. Clear; 5 in. snow on ground; streams frozen; wind N. 10 m. p. h., dying down toward evening; temp. 0° to 10°; 10 miles on foot, 2 by car. Observers together. Beth and Philip Clampitt.

12. NEWTON (from Westwood Park south along Cherry Creek to South Skunk River, back through fields; pastures 30%, timbered undergrowth creek bottom 40%, virgin timbered river bottom 20%, town suburbs 10%): Jan. 1, 1951; 8 a. m. to 5:15 p. m. Clear; ground almost bare; water frozen; wind WNW, 1-5 m. p. h.; temp. 31° to 30°; total party hours, 18 (17½ on foot, ½ by car); total party miles, 43 (40 on foot, 3 by car). Observers in two parties. John Paul Moore, James Gaylor, Ralph Agar, Konnie and Mass Yoshinaga, Robert Lloyd, Fred Martin, Ivan Lee Moore, Larry Moore (Newton Bird and Nature Club).

13. SIOUX CITY (to Preparation Canyon; Missouri River bottoms; an auto trip with return up the Little Sioux River valley): Dec. 28; 9 a. m. to 5 p. m. Clear; snow only in shaded places; brisk NW wind up to 30 m. p. h.; temp. 17° to 39°; ½ mile on foot around the state preserve, 127 miles by car. Observers together. Mr. and Mrs. William Youngworth.

An adult Golden Eagle was watched for several minutes in the rough canyon country north of Preparation Canyon.

14. STEAMBOAT ROCK (and Pine Lake regions; 50% open country, 50% woodland): Dec. 26; 5 hours, 40 minutes. Clear; deep snow; wind 5-15 m. p. h.; temp. 9°; 5½ miles on foot, 53½ by car. Mrs. J. Ray King, Mrs. Harold Brown.

15. TAMA (30-mile auto trip in and around Tama): Dec. 21; 6 hours. Clear and cold; light wind. Mrs. W. G. MacMartin.

16. WATERLOO (NE Black Hawk County, adjoining parts of Bremer County, 3 miles west of Denver, east to Wapsipinicon River area; farmlands and roadsides 48%, swamp and willow areas along Crane Creek 13%; Wapsipinicon River bottoms 26%, Big Woods west of Denver 13%): Dec. 28; 8 a. m. to 3:45 p. m. Mostly clear; 12 in. snow on ground; no open water; wind SW to S, 10-25 m. p. h.; temp. 10° to 28°; 6¼ miles on foot, 67¾ by car. Mrs. John Barlow, Mrs. Harold Brown, Mrs. J. Ray King, Myrle M. Burk, Jack Heifner.

17. WINTHROP (roadsides, woods and fields in vicinity of Winthrop, also a drive to Independence and Quasqueton): Dec. 31; 9 a. m. to 1:30 p. m. Cloudy but sun showing through at times; 8 in. crusted snow on the level; wind E, fairly strong; temp. 22° at start, 35° at return; 1 mile on foot, 28 by car. Observers together. Earl Freeman, Paul Pierce, F. J. Pierce.



WESTERN MEADOWLARK  
Drawing by E. W. Steffen.

#### GENERAL NOTES

**Birds Seen near Marble Rock.**—The year 1950 proved to be a good one for bird watching and I had some interesting records. I saw a pair of Upland Plovers at a distance several times in early July, and on July 9 I studied them closely and identified them. I saw my first Krider's Hawk in July. On September 20 there was a White-eyed Vireo in our crabapple thicket. On October 12 a Mockingbird sat for some time in the shrubbery northwest of our house. Other interesting records were: Lark Sparrow, seen on May 3; three Cedar Waxwings, June 2; two Golden-winged Warblers, Sept. 19; Wood Thrush, May 3; Forster's Terns in May; on May 16 I saw 16 Black-crowned Night Herons in flight. The new year got off to a good start with a Robin here on New Year's Day, 1951.—PEARL KNOOP, Marble Rock, Iowa.

**Notes from Story County.**—Although I have been observing birds since the turn of the century or earlier, my first record of the Cedar Waxwing in Story County was on May 28, 1950, when I observed a flock of six at close quarters. They were feeding on over-ripe strawberries and other kitchen scraps on the ground. I saw them again on May 29, when they were hawking for insects.

The Cardinal is also a comparatively new bird for this immediate vicinity, although it has been present for years, in small numbers, around the more timbered localities. My first local record was one male observed on November 27, 1947. During the winter of 1947-48 I saw several at different times. On April 23, 1948, I heard its song for the first time, and on July 31, 1948, my first record of the female was made. On October 12, 1949, several were noted. During 1950, I saw the first one on May 10, and on August 15, 17, and 22, several were observed.—HENRY BIRKELAND, Roland, Iowa.

**Albino Horned Lark and Fall Records.**—One afternoon in early October, 1950, I had one of the biggest thrills of "birding" when I saw an albino Prairie Horned Lark. I was plowing oat-stubble ground when a flock of about 25 Horned Larks swirled by and lit near me. I at once noticed the light-colored one. I had seen light-colored larks before, but this one was lighter than any others, and I decided to try to get a nearer view. I knew I could drive the tractor nearer to it than I could walk, and I managed to drive within 25 feet; I studied it closely for several moments before it flew. I saw it in bright sunlight and it was a dull white rather than a bright sheen. When it flew I had a good view of its back, which was entirely white but slightly darker than the breast. It also lacked the characteristic black tail feathers. The bird was in sharp contrast to its fellow members, several of which were sitting near by. I saw it several times that afternoon and again the next morning.

I saw several species of birds in their fall migration. On October 11, 100 or more Franklin's Gulls followed me and picked up worms and grubs turned up by the plow, or caught on the wing the insects that flew out of the clover and weeds. I was also able to identify four American Pipits, a Le-Conte's Sparrow, Clay-colored, Savannah and Lark Sparrows, and several Myrtle Warblers.—JIM KEENAN, Ogden, Iowa.

**A Kinglet Visitor.**—December 16, 1950, some friends found a female Golden-crowned Kinglet looking for shelter among a few Christmas trees for display on a sidewalk in front of a store in Postville. The bird made no effort to get away when they picked it up. They took it to their home and called my son, Fritz, to come and identify it. Fritz took it to our home where we kept it indoors. In the house the bird sang and persisted on lighting on Fritz's and my head. It made but little effort to get away when picked up and usually just seemed to crouch a little when our hand approached. We offered water and such food as we hoped might interest a kinglet. We tried fruit in small pieces, both raw and cooked, cooked raspberries and shavings of apple but could not interest it. For the night the bird rested in some bittersweet vines on the bookshelf. In the morning it seemed quite full of life, and again rested on our heads and sang. That morning we drove five miles to a nice spruce grove and released it. There, as any healthy kinglet would do, it searched for food on the small branches and appeared to find some. It seemed not at all interested in us. At first we were but a few feet away, but soon the bird became intensively active and was soon out of sight.—ARTHUR J. PALAS, Postville, Iowa.

**Pine Grosbeak and Red Crossbill at Sioux City.**—On November 10, 1950, the writer identified an immature male Pine Grosbeak in the yard of Mrs. E. A. Emery, my neighbor. From then on this bird, and sometimes another one which we thought was a female, stayed around and fed mostly on the buds of the bush honeysuckles, which are numerous in neighboring yards. Toward the end of January, 1951, the grosbeaks shifted to cultivated gooseberry bushes. They littered the ground with the brown husks which covered the buds. Mrs. Emery feared for this year's gooseberry crop, and it will be interesting to see how much damage has been done by these friendly grosbeaks.

A flock of Red Crossbills made an appearance on November 18, 1950, and were seen in numbers of from three to seven during most of December and up to January 3, 1951. Their favorite food was the seed of the white ash trees. This is the writer's first authentic record of the crossbills in nearly 20 years. The last published record of the Pine Grosbeak at Sioux City was that of a male bird authentically identified by the late Dr. T. C. Stephens, on November 2, 1924, near Stone Park, Plymouth County, Iowa.—WM. YOUNG-WORTH, Sioux City, Iowa.



**Unusual Feeding Habit of the Eastern Kingbird.**—On July 23, 1949, I observed an adult Kingbird constantly flying low over the Mississippi River at Davenport and snatching aquatic insects off the surface of the water. The bird seemed to be quite expert in this method although several times it evidently misjudged distance and was "dunked" in the river.—JAMES HODGES, Davenport, Iowa.

**The Mississippi River Goose Flight.**—In recent issues of "Iowa Bird Life" notes and articles by Musgrove, Pierce, Stiles, and others have described the great goose migration in the Missouri Valley. More often than not, bird watchers in the eastern half of Iowa have had to be content to share these experiences vicariously because of the time and expense involved in a trip half way or more across the state. The Mississippi River in Iowa, with its dams to prevent flooding, its narrow, almost canyon-like valley, its lack of suitable resting and feeding grounds, is not nearly as attractive to geese as is the Missouri. But each year more and more geese use the Mississippi flyway, and almost all the northbound geese stop for a while at the Spring Lake Refuge near Savannah, Illinois. Iowa bird students who live within an easy drive of Savanna or Clinton, Iowa, will find a trip to the refuge very rewarding.

The refuge proper lies about 7 miles above Thompson, Illinois, or about 3 miles below Savannah on Illinois Highway 80. But during the spring all the bays, marshes, meadows, and sloughs west of Highway 80 and between Savannah and Lock and Dam 13 are used as resting grounds by the geese. Directions for reaching specific resting grounds are too involved to set down here, but any of the roads leading west from 80 will eventually give access to resting grounds. Since the roads are sandy, they are passable in almost any weather. Farmers, filling-station operators, and almost anyone at Thompson will gladly furnish directions to the areas the geese are using. An extensive marsh beside Highway 80 one mile south of Thompson is almost certain to have some geese by late afternoon and they can be seen perfectly without even leaving the car.

Geese are present in the area from early March until the end of April, but the last week of March and the first two weeks of April are the best times for a visit. The numbers of geese are in no way comparable to those in the Missouri Valley. The manager of the Spring Lake Refuge estimated a maximum of 7000 geese present during the first week of April. On April 2, 1950, I estimated 2000 Blue Geese, 1000 Snow Geese, and 2200 Canada Geese on the resting ground below the railroad signal tower south of Thompson. White-fronted and Hutchins's Geese have also been reported, and at least 15 species of ducks are common in spring. On November 7, 1950, there were 1100 Blue, Snow, and Canada Geese within the boundaries of the refuge. In both spring and fall the geese leave their resting grounds to feed in fields along Highway 80 every afternoon between 3 and 5 p. m. or earlier on dark or stormy days in spring.—THOMAS MORRISSEY, Davenport, Iowa.

#### RECENT BIRD BOOKS

**MENABONI'S BIRDS.** Paintings by Athos Menaboni, text by Sara Menaboni (Rinehart & Co., New York, 1950; cloth, 4to, pp. i-xiii & 1-132, with 32 colored plates, 14 black & white plates; price, \$10.00).

A beautifully printed production, this book has given nature lovers over the country an introduction to the art work of Italian-born Athos Menaboni, who previously had been more or less unknown.

Menaboni's paintings, as presented in this volume, show him to be a bird artist of great talent. His colored bird figures are smooth, detailed to an extreme degree, and apparently trace every feather with meticulous care. In some of the plates of small birds more prominence is given to the towering

verdure of plant life than to the birds themselves. He appears to be particularly adept in the handling of plant subjects. The similarity to Audubon's paintings is noticed by nearly everyone who looks through the book. This redounds to the credit of Audubon—when a style developed by a self-taught artist of a century and a half ago is worthy of imitating in the present day.

The Menaboni book is merely a collection of paintings by the new artist, not presented by families or in any systematic way. Very extravagant claims have been made for the book. It is a nice book to look at, filled with beautiful colored plates, but the reviewer feels compelled to state honestly that he does not consider the book important ornithologically or one that would be very useful in bird study.

The accompanying text, by Mrs. Menaboni, is interesting reading and describes their experiences with birds, especially with crippled birds brought to their home near Atlanta, Georgia. Their care of these birds restored most of them to health, while some of the convalescents were used as subjects for the artist's brush. We feel that the written text is of a rather minor nature with too-frequent use of anthropomorphism to give the birds actions and motives more human than birdlike. This may be a modern trend, but in ornithological books striving for accuracy it should be discouraged.

We cite one or two examples of a loose handling of words. The Coot's "eyes were sad and his expression pensive always." Mrs. Menaboni wonders if the Coot came to Atlanta "to see the beautiful homes, breathe the smoke, sip the famous cola drink." Coots don't drink cokes in Atlanta any more than they do in Iowa, and it will be difficult for serious bird students to reconcile themselves to this sort of nonsense in pretentious bird books published in the upper price brackets.

The publishers have done their utmost to make the book a handsome adjunct to the library shelf.—F. J. P.

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**WHERE TO FIND BIRDS IN MINNESOTA**, compiled by Kenneth D. Morrison and Josephine Daneman Herz (Itasca Press, Webb Publishing Co., St. Paul, 1950; spiral board binding, 12mo, pp. i-xiii & 1-122, with numerous maps & text drawings; price, \$1.50).

A generation ago motorists traveled by the famous "Blue Book", an auto-trails guide that described in painstaking detail every crook and turn in the roads which were then entirely unmarked. This little book in its careful directions for reaching obscure birding grounds, reminds us of the old tour guides. Perhaps some day the birding areas will be marked on highway maps, just as state parks and other joints of interest are now marked. At present, bird students in Minnesota may find such areas by using this handy, well-prepared guide.

Sixty-two birding areas, parks and sanctuaries are covered in the book. The information was furnished by a corps of about 50 field observers who have tested the areas and know which ones will furnish the best field trips.

The book is divided into four sections, each section accompanied by a map which ties into a larger map of the state. After each divisional map there is a list of towns, with nearby birding areas mentioned. With each area detailed directions for reaching it are given, also a description of the physical features and vantage points for observation, a list of the birds found there, with some of the best previous records, as well as mention of some of the restrictions and hazards that may be encountered.

It's a handy-sized little book to fit into the glove compartment of the car. We would like to see some one compile a similar book for Iowa. There would surely be a demand for such books in the vacation states of Colorado, Wyoming and various others. Let us hope that other state bird organizations take hold of the idea and follow Minnesota's excellent example.—F. J. P.

HANDBOOK OF ATTRACTING BIRDS, by Thomas P. McElroy, Jr. (Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., New York, 1950; cloth, 12mo, pp. i-xiv & 1-163, with 51 drawings; price, \$2.75).

Books on attracting birds have been rather numerous over the years. This newest work on the subject is quite complete and well worth owning.

The opening chapter discusses the "why" of attracting birds, followed by chapters on ways to attract them, the best methods of artificial feeding and the most successful feed mixtures, with many feeding devices described and illustrated. A good descriptive list of trees, shrubs and vines attractive to bird life is a valuable feature. There are suggestions for helping birds at nesting time, as well as detailed plans for building various types of houses.

Other topics more or less thoroughly treated include ways to attract game birds and waterfowl, and what to plant to bring birds to the small garden, and to country homes and estates. Predators as related to the balance of nature will give many persons a proper understanding of some important problems. The care and feeding of young or crippled birds occupies a small space in the book and will be found helpful. A final chapter tells how to establish and maintain a sanctuary, while a good list of reference titles rounds out this well-designed book on a subject that interests a great many people. Attracting birds is not only fascinating but makes bird students out of those who start with only a casual interest.—F. J. P.

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COMMON HAWKS AND OWLS OF IOWA, by Ellis A. Hicks; Iowa Youth Series No. 2 (Bulletin Office, Iowa State College, Ames, 1950; 8½ x 11 in., pp. 1-24, illustrated; price, 15c).

This is a fine educational booklet, one that will do a great deal of good if it can be given adequate distribution. The Turkey Vulture, eight species of hawks and seven species of owls are described. With each bird there is a brief statement of color, nest, other names, length, weight and wingspread, followed by a description of some of its habits, field marks and characteristics, and whether it is beneficial or harmful. The drawings (artist not named) will identify most of the owls, but as might be expected in black and white crayon drawings, the hawks all look quite similar. Two pages of flight pictures, showing the under side of the birds, conclude the book.—F. J. P.

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Since so many of our members make trips to the West, we should like to call attention to a new edition of Ernest Sheldon Booth's "Birds of the West", published by Stanford University. The book is quite similar in size and scope to the well-known Peterson guides. The colored plates carry a striking resemblance to the Peterson drawings. It is an attractive book and should be a very useful companion on a western trip. There is a chapter on how to study birds' nests and eggs and another on bird photography. The book has 212 pages; there are eight plates which show 200 birds in full color, and 400 small drawings in black and white are scattered through the text (price \$6.00).—F. J. P.

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The Proceedings of the Iowa Horticultural Society for 1949, recently published by the State, contained a fine article, "Plants That Attract Birds", by Mrs. Toni R. Wendelburg. In the 16-page article, with three photographs, Mrs. Wendelburg covers the subject very nicely, drawing on her own experience and thorough knowledge of plant life. She discusses some of the features of the Des Moines Audubon Society bird sanctuary near her home, and there are lists of plants that furnish food and cover for birds. A great deal of information on the subject is presented in a very readable manner.



The National Audubon Society, to commemorate the centennial of Audubon's death, has issued a series of 24 gummed stamps. These reproduce the famous Audubon paintings in very attractive form, and they may be used to decorate letters, envelopes, etc. The stamps come 24 to a set, or sheet, and are sold at two sheets for \$1.00 by the headquarters of the Society.

#### RIISING COSTS — A PROBLEM

Like all magazines large or small, "Iowa Bird Life" is faced with the problem of rising printing costs. These have more than doubled from the levels that prevailed a number of years ago.

The Iowa Ornithologists' Union is one of the very few organizations that has not raised dues to offset these price rises. We have preferred to try to increase the size of our membership instead of raise dues—believing that we thus reach a wider audience and do more good in the cause that we espouse.

Our present issue is 24 instead of the 28 or 32 pages that we ought to have if we could afford it. The unpublished material on hand warrants a larger magazine but our finances do not. A large section of General Notes is necessarily withheld from this issue.

Since practically all our income comes from members' dues, we urge as many as possible to take the higher classes of membership (Contributing Member, \$10 a year; Supporting Member, \$3 a year) in order that our funds will be more ample and we may have a larger magazine. In that way a good deal of material will not have to be deferred or rejected entirely.—F. J. P.

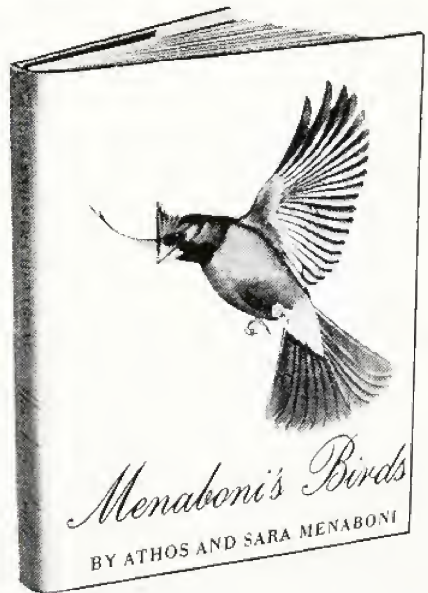
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